

The Truth

The Buddha understood, discovered and actualized the world truth as it is. With this understanding he could overcome all defilements which disturb peace of mind and attain the highest bliss of Nibbana. Also, he kindly pointed out the path to others too how to achieve that position. People in the world mainly suffer because of ignorance. Truth is the opposite of ignorance. If we can realize the main cause of suffering as ignorance and overcome it completely realizing the truth, we are also able to overcome suffering and attain final bliss of liberation.

The Buddha explains very clearly that whether a Buddha appears or not in the world the truth he realized is forever. The duty of the Buddhas is the discovery of this truth. The Buddhas who appear in the world from time to time discover themselves this truth which is covered by delusion. We respect the Buddha because of their great dedication. People who are intelligent listen to this truth from good friends, reflect on it and practice it. Then they also can see the result that the Buddha experienced. That is the nature of the Dhamma which can be realized by the wise.

The Buddha himself says the qualities of the Dhamma. The Dhamma that the Buddha explained is well expounded (*Svākkhāto*), directly visible (*Sanditthiko*), immediately effective (*Akālika*), calling one to come and see (*Ehipassiko*), leading onwards (*Opanaiko*), to be personally realized by the wise (*Paccattam Veditabbo Vinnuhi*). To achieve final bliss of liberation, we have to listen to the Buddha's message with good attention for our knowledge and follow it honestly as much as we can.

In the Dhammapada which is the handbook of the Buddhist explains the importance and value of the truth or the Dhamma.

*Sabbadānaṃ dhammadānaṃ jināti, Sabbarasaṃ dhammaraso jināti;
Sabbaratīṃ dhammaratī jināti, Tanhakkhayo sabbadukkhaṃ jināti.*

(Dhammapada-Tanhavagga)

The gift of Dhamma (Truth) excels all other gifts; the flavor (taste) of the Dhamma excels all other flavors; the delight (pleasure) in Dhamma excels all other delights. The Craving-Freed overcomes all suffering.

Offering Dhamma to someone is the best gift. When we offer food to someone, it is useful only for few days. If we give some cloths to a person, it is beneficial for few years. When we give a job to somebody, it is helpful only till retirement. Offering a house to someone is beneficial only for his or her lifetime. If we can help someone with Dhamma explaining the way how to overcome suffering, it is valuable for his entire life and to till the end of Sansara to suffering. That is why Buddhism points out the gift of Dhamma excels all other gifts.

Further above stanza describes the flavor of the Dhamma excels all other flavors. If someone can live with Dhamma, he or she can see the beauty of life. Also, they can really enjoy life. With practicing and experiencing they are mostly interested in Dhamma than other things and persons. And, when someone practices Dhamma, gradually defilements like craving decrease. Then they feel the real happiness in the life. Our real success and happiness depend on how far we have overcome negative thoughts such as greed, anger, delusion.

The main purpose of Buddhism is to point out the world truth and to encourage people to actualize that truth. According to Buddhism, truth can be divided into two. One of them is conventional truth (*Sammuti sacca*) that the worldly people have realized. The other truth is ultimate truth (*Paramatta sacca*). The Buddha has explained doctrines based on both of them. Based on conventional truth Buddhism describes how to succeed this life and the sansaric journey. Buddhism points out some advice to succeed this life like education, employment, health, family situation and morality. If someone can follow these guidance, they are able to be successful this life. Furthermore, Buddhism introduces some doctrines to succeed future lives based on conventional truth like practicing generosity, morality and meditation. As the result of practicing this path anyone can succeed next lives for a long time as the result of higher spirituality. However, we are still in suffering since this conventional truth is not the real truth. Also, this truth isn't enough to overcome suffering like old age, death and rebirth completely. That is why Buddhism points out the highest level of truth which is the ultimate truth.

According to ultimate truth, the past has ceased and the future hasn't come yet. We have only the present moment which also arises and ceases at the moment according to conditions.

We continuously experience through our six senses which are eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. When objects such as forms, sounds, smell, and taste reach the senses, we experience about the world. The Buddha describes our entire world is these six internal senses and external objects. The nature of this experience is arising at the moment and instantly ceasing at once. Anything is not permanent among those twelve things. They arise and cease at the moment according to the condition. They are not being occurred (in the past) comes to an occurrence. Being occurred (at the present) will not come to (the future) occurrence (අනුත්ථා සම්භූතං භුත්වා න භවිස්සති). It means if we experience something now, it was not happened in the past in the same way like now. This is the special teaching that Buddhism teaches us as impermanence in the concept of the dependent origination. If we can understand and keep our mindfulness according to this knowledge, we can overcome all kinds of sufferings. Here, first we have to develop our knowledge, secondly, according to knowledge, we have to reflect on it, and finally, we have to apply it in our life practicing tranquility and insight meditation. Practicing this path anyone can overcome ignorance and achieve wisdom, the truth.

Whenever we experience something through our senses five aggregates arise. We experience something about forms, sounds, smell, taste, touch and volitions as the result of arising of five aggregates. Not only arising five aggregates, but they immediately cease without

remaining anything. This is the nature of any experience we receive through our senses. Five aggregates are form, feelings, perception, mental formations and consciousness. These five aggregates are also impermanent. Buddha says very clearly he declares to reflect on these five aggregate as arising and ceasing to persons who are in any kind of spiritual state. As the result of reflecting five aggregate as arising and ceasing, impermanence can be realized by the disciple who knows the Dhamma, who sees the Dhamma. Then unsatisfactoriness and selflessness are also comprehended. The skillful learned disciple always lives reflecting three characteristics like close friends. Simultaneously, learned disciple frequently practices tranquility and insight meditation like his breathing. If someone can be on this path, he or she is always going on the path of purification reaching ultimate liberation.

Concentration is not enough to eradicate defilements completely. That is why Buddhism says us to develop another step that is insight meditation for permanent happiness. Here, with the concentrated mind, we reflect all kinds of things that mental and physical on three characteristics of existence (ත්‍රිලක්ෂණ). They are;

- | | | |
|------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| i. | Impermanence, | (<i>Anicca</i> -අනිච්ච) |
| ii. | Unsatisfactoriness | (<i>Dukkha</i> -දුක්ඛ) |
| iii. | Selflessness | (<i>Anatta</i> -අනත්ත) |

We do reflection again and again on these three characteristics of existence (ත්‍රිලක්ෂණ). As a result of practicing this world reality, we develop wisdom with the knowledge of impermanence. Simultaneously, we develop five qualities which are confidence (*Saddā* - සද්ධා), effort (*Viriya* - විරිය), mindfulness (*Sati* - සති), concentration (*Samādhi* - සමාධි) and wisdom (*Pannā* - පඤ්ඤා). As the result of practicing The Noble Eightfold Path with mindfulness and wisdom, we gradually reach to the real happiness decreasing defilements. Final experience of this is living in the present moment with full awareness seeing arising and ceasing without any desirable attachment or destruction. That is the highest goal of practicing the Buddha's message which is the world reality. Then we are able to overcome unsatisfactoriness, sorrow, lamentations and all kind of sufferings completely in this life itself. The real victory is that the complete defeating of ignorance.



May the Triple Gem Bless you!

තෙරුවන් සරණයි!

May all beings be well happy and peaceful!

(සියලු සත්ත්වයෝ සුවපත් වෙත්වා!)

(Tuesday Dhamma Discussion of Los Angeles Buddhist Vihara in Pasadena. 12/06/2016)